

imagine

a democratic alternative to the monarchy

10



Republic Day success

See inside for details

PLUS:

Appointing the PM: by Adam Tomkins

Republic Campaign Ltd is launched

And MORE

Republic

The Campaign for an
Elected Head of State

Royals hit the jackpot

In late June and early July the Queen and Prince Charles launched their latest PR offensives, namely their annual financial reports.

Charles was first off the block with the interesting revelation that he is only paying £3.2m tax on an income of over £14m. He went on to claim that his wife only sets the taxpayer back a mere £2,000.

Two days later the Queen revealed an increase in the cost of keeping her on the throne, but insisted that she only costs each of us 62p a year.

Republic responded with calls for more transparency and for the royals to be subject to the same tax laws as the rest of us.

Republic's Campaign Manager, Graham Smith, told reporters, "The idea pushed by the royal PR machine is that the royals should be seen as hard working ambassadors who earn their keep. Instead they seem more like lottery winners who hit the jackpot every week."

"They ignore millions of pounds in security costs and lost taxes and then include every child, infant and pensioner when dividing the cost amongst taxpayers. This is very obvious spin, and we're going to expose it at every opportunity."

The financial reports were challenged by Republic through adverts in the national press and a demonstration outside Buckingham Palace.

Peter Tatchell, who joined the demonstrators, told interviewers, "The Queen's personal wealth is shrouded



in secrecy. There is little open disclosure."

He added, "Until we get full transparency concerning the Queen's finances, there will always be doubts as to whether her contribution to the exchequer is fair and above board."

As always supporters of the Windsor family tried to argue that the monarchy brings in tourism revenue - a claim for which they have never provided evidence - and some remarkably suggested republics are more expensive (Germany's president costs little over £11m a year).

Of course Republic was keen to stress that the finances are not the main point in the debate. Even a free monarchy would be too much for

100 Club

The Winners!

The winning numbers for July were: 1st prize 1004 (D Bennington) and 2nd prize 1018 (J Coten). The winning numbers for August were: 1st prize 1002 (D Bennington) and 2nd prize 1006 (D Bennington).

The numbers were drawn at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

Remember, you need to be in it to win it. The more members, the bigger the prizes.

GOOD LUCK FOR NEXT MONTH

those who want to see the institution replaced with a democratic and accountable alternative.

♦

Camilla managed to undermine her husband's own PR strategy

recently when it was revealed the taxpayer is forking out almost £2m to provide security for her own private home. So much for the £2000 Charles claimed she cost us last year.

The revelation in the Times was met with this response from Republic supporter Ian Davidson MP: "How many houses does this woman need? [These] costs should be met from the vast sums the Prince takes out of the Duchy of Cornwall." ■

Voters say 'No' to royal rip-off

A recent opinion poll showed a clear majority believe the taxpayer should pay nothing towards the royal family. With an incredible 52.3% saying the Windsors should rely solely on their own private income the poll marked a significant coup for the republican campaign.

Republic said in response to the polls, "No matter how little the Windsors claim we spend on them each year, it is too much for most people. The public don't want to spend 3.5p on Charles, or 61p on the Queen."

He added, "And those small figures are misleading and inaccurate. They ignore security costs and tax exemptions which add tens of millions to the taxpayers' bill."

The poll also showed that Prince Charles' continued exemption from certain taxes was something the voters want changed.

Graham Smith explained, "His £14m income comes from the Duchy of Cornwall, which continues to be exempt from Capital Gains tax and Corporation Tax and which continues to subsidise his lifestyle. The taxpayer

has lost tens of millions of pounds in recent years thanks to this cosy arrangement."

The poll - commissioned by Republic - showed that over 80% of people believe Prince Charles should pay the same tax as everyone else. Republic told the press, "Not only does the Prince gain financially from these tax exemptions for the Duchy, it is estimated that when the Queen dies he will save almost £100m in unpaid inheritance tax. This is not value for money, this is a right royal rip off." ■

Republic Day 2006

The inaugural Republic Day went well by all accounts. The day began with a

delegation of Republic supporters - including long time Republic member Claire Rayner - handing a petition and open letter to Downing Street.

In the evening Republic Day was celebrated with the 'Bash' at the Freemason's Arms in Covent Garden. The Bash was well attended and the party goers enjoyed the free buffet, raffle draw and guest speaker, Anthony Scrivener QC. The raffle prizes included wine, republican themed books and a bottle of House of Commons whisky signed by Norman Baker MP.

On the morning of the following day a number of members and supporters held a promotional stall in Covent Garden. Leaflets were handed out and petition signatures were collected - giving Republic an added public presence to mark the first Republic Day.

The General Meeting held in the afternoon of the 3rd was well attended and provided an opportunity for lively debate on the future direction of the campaign, as well as



the chance for members to approve Republic's transition to becoming a limited company.

Members around the country did their bit too, with lots of people ordering the special Republic Day Action Pack, which included posters, stickers, leaflets and other promotional materials. As a result we reached every corner of the UK.

Republic Day is set to become a key date in our calendar and plans are already being laid for 2007. ■

Republic Day 2007

June 2nd 2007 will be the second Republic Day. Next year we want the day

to be even bigger and even better. Make sure you put the date in your diary - and be there to support the cause.

The Republic Day Bash will be on again, and we hope to hold an even bigger promotional event in central London. We will also be looking at new ways to involve members and supporters around the country.

We have big ambitions for Republic Day, so your support is crucial. Details will be published in future editions of *Imagine* as well as being posted on the website.

Visit www.republic.org.uk/rday nearer the time to find out more. ■

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Letters

With regard to Prince Charles receiving 3.5p for every man, woman and child in the country here is one way to get this in perspective. My friend made a living as a milkman getting 1p per pint for every pint he delivered. Prince Charles would have to deliver upwards of 190 million pints of milk a day to get what he receives from us. I don't think he works as hard as one milkman let alone thousands. It really is a right royal rip off!

Jeff Cowley
Sheffield

I want to say how admiring I am of the way you are conducting the business of Republic - keeping in touch regularly with members,

planning and offering events that seem especially worthy and most compelling. (I only wish I could have attended your Spring Conference!) The emails are most welcome.

Finally, let me offer you very best wishes for the inaugural Republic Day - The Bash, the Covent Garden action, and the General Meeting. I was certainly with you in spirit.

You are truly making history with the most progressive, peaceful, and liberating ideas and actions. I hope you all had a wonderful, glorious Republic Day!

Joyce Chumbley
Orlando, Florida
USA

I was intrigued by a piece on what will happen to the name of the country, when the monarchy finally disappears.

From a historical point of view, I should have thought that the "style" of a British republic would be obvious

- namely "The Commonwealth of Great Britain". "Commonwealth" is the original word for "republic", in English, and why shouldn't we use a term which is distinctive to us? "The Commonwealth of Massachusetts" and "The Commonwealth of Australia", influenced by British terminology, have stood the test of time.

Erin Conrad
Northumberland

We'd like to hear from you. Are you organising any local activities or do you have some views on the campaign or the issues that you'd like to share? Send your letters to imagine@republic.org.uk or to *Imagine*, PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

If you would like to contribute an article to Imagine email imagine@republic.org.uk or call Graham Smith on 08708 508 825 and ask for a copy of the Writer's Guidelines.

APPOINTING THE PM



■ ADAM TOMKINS

One of the most misleading things that could be said about the Queen is that she is more or less harmless because her

power, such as it is, has now been effectively reduced to the symbolic. No matter how frequently you see this line being spun, do not be taken in. The Queen is, and remains, a woman in whom remarkable legal power is vested. Several examples could be used to illustrate this. Here, we will focus on the Queen's power to appoint the Prime Minister.

Only the Queen may appoint the Prime Minister. Nobody else may do it on her behalf. Legally, she may appoint whomever she wishes to be Prime Minister. There is no legal requirement even that her appointee be a Member of Parliament. There is certainly no requirement that he be elected. Further, if the Queen decided that there should be no Prime Minister, it would be perfectly lawful for her not to make an appointment and for the position to remain vacant. There is no legal requirement that there be a Prime Minister – that we have one at all is the result of custom, not law.

Now, normally of course the Queen does not exercise any choice as to whom to appoint as Prime Minister: convention dictates that she appoint the person who is leader of the political party that for the time being commands a majority in the House of

Commons. This has been accepted practice since the early nineteenth century. This is what 'normally' happens. But politics, as we all know, is not altogether predictable, and does not always follow the 'normal' path. What if the abnormal, or the unusual, occurs? What if, for example, there is no clear leader of the majority party in Parliament? Or what if there is no party that has a clear majority in the House of Commons? Neither of these events is fanciful. Indeed, both have actually happened at various times during the present Queen's reign.

The first happened in 1957 and again in 1963, at either end of Harold Macmillan's period as Prime Minister. On both occasions the Conservative party was split as to who its leader should be. Substantial factions favoured RA Butler, but others were deeply opposed to him and were not squeamish about persuading the Queen to use her powers of appointment to keep him away from 10 Downing Street. Allowing herself to be 'duped' in this way was, in the verdict of the Queen's biographer, 'the biggest political misjudgement of her reign'. The consequence of these events was that the Conservative party changed the rules governing its leadership elections, to make it less likely that such royal interference could recur.

The second event occurred in 1974, the last time that a British general election resulted in a 'hung parliament' (that is, where no one party has an overall majority in the

Commons). Here there is no clear rule as to whom should become Prime Minister and, as a result, there is every danger that the Queen, perhaps through no fault of her own, would become embroiled in an untidy and intractable political dispute. This was avoided in 1974 but there is no guarantee that it would be avoided again. Such a danger, moreover, is completely unnecessary. In devolved Scotland, where, because of the electoral system, hung parliaments and coalition government are much more likely, the Queen has no choice as to whom to invite to be her First Minister. The Scotland Act 1998 expressly provides that it is for the Scottish Parliament to nominate one of its members to be First Minister, and that this nominee is the person that the Queen should appoint. No equivalent provision exists with regard to the British Prime Minister.

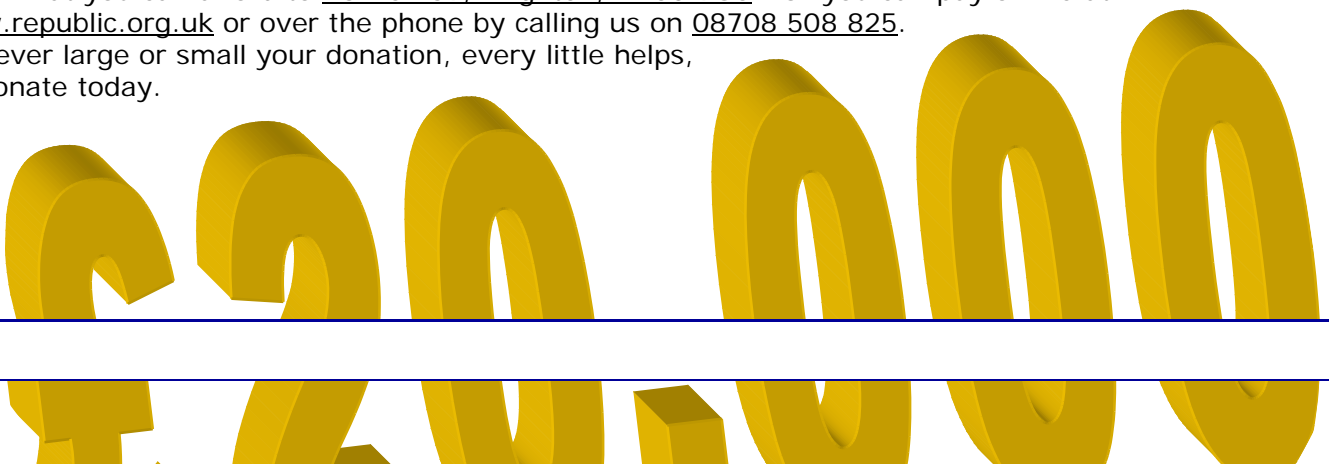
The appointment of the Prime Minister is not the Queen's only power. In addition, her personal approval is needed before Parliament may be dissolved (the legal trigger that leads to a general election) and her personal approval is needed before the Bills passed by Parliament can acquire the force of law. As with the power to appoint the Prime Minister, both of these legal powers are now heavily constrained by convention, but they remain exceedingly important. They will be the subject of a future article in *Imagine*. ■

This is part of a series of articles by Adam Tomkins, Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow and co-author of *How We Should Rule Ourselves*.

Help us raise £20,000

Help Republic raise £20,000! That's our aim: to raise £20,000 from our members and supporters every year. Be a part of it, donate today.

The key to our success is the funding needed to put our plans into action. All you need do is send what you can afford to PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS. Or you can pay online at www.republic.org.uk or over the phone by calling us on 08708 508 825. However large or small your donation, every little helps, so donate today.



I am a republican

• MICHAEL COYNE

From Chambers dictionary:
'republic, n. a form of government without a monarch, in which the supreme power is vested in the people and their elected representatives; a state or country so governed. – adj. republican, of or favouring a republic; – n. a person who advocates a republican form of government'.

I am a republican. For years, whenever I have found myself broaching this topic with anyone for the first time, I've identified myself as 'a dictionary-definition republican'. I shouldn't have to do this – should *never* have had to do it. Yet the dominant culture of the British media, particularly on television, has subtly, snidely and systematically given republicanism a bad name. This effect has been achieved by consistent use of the word 'republican' in connection with the

troubled and tragically violent history of Northern Ireland.

IRA spokesmen, IRA demonstrations and acts of violence for which the IRA claimed responsibility have been routinely referred to by newscasters as 'republican spokesmen ... republican demonstrations ... republican violence'. Regrettably, the state of modern political culture in the UK is such that there must be plenty of 'patriots' who would willingly knock seven bells out of self-proclaimed republicans – not because of what they *are*, but rather because of what such 'patriots' might misconstrue republicanism to mean.

Thus my use of the phrase 'dictionary-definition republican'; but I'm probably wasting my breath. Anyone sufficiently inflamed to use fists because he hates my political philosophy is unlikely to consult the dictionary first, just to make sure it's a fair cop. So this article is the last time I'll bother with the qualifier.



In plain truth, despite pro-Establishment insinuations to the contrary, a republican is not a terrorist, not an anarchist, not a crank or misfit who wants to see ordered society overthrown and reduced to chaos. A republican is an individual – above all, in this country, an *individual* – who believes that monarchy is an unjust, undeserving,

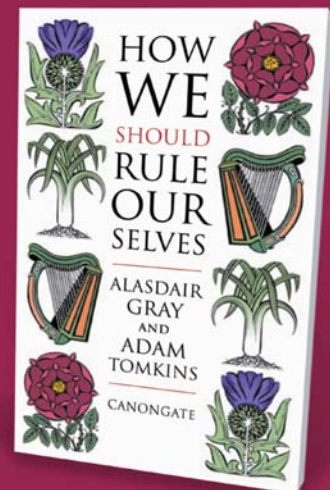
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READER OFFER

"This book makes the case for republican reform robustly and breathlessly." *Observer*

A limited number of copies of *How We Should Rule Ourselves* by Alasdair Gray and *Imagine* contributor Professor Adam Tomkins are available at the special price of £2.00 each.

Order half price copies (£2.00 each) by sending a cheque made payable to Canongate Books Limited (please add £1.12 postage). Send to: Imagine Offer, Canongate Books, 14 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1TE.



"IF WE ARE **UNHAPPY** WITH OUR PRESENT SYSTEM OF **GOVERNMENT** IN BRITAIN
ALL THAT STOPS US FROM ACTING TO CHANGE IT IS OUR **OWN LAZINESS**
 OR **LACK OF IMAGINATION.**" ALASDAIR GRAY AND ADAM TOMKINS

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CANONGATE
www.canongate.net

New Board for new Limited Company

Following the Republic Day General Meeting on June 3rd Republic has completed the transition to being a company, limited by guarantee.

The move means Republic is now registered with Companies House as Republic Campaign Ltd. The new company has a Memorandum and Articles of Association to replace the constitution and a new Board of Directors to replace the Executive Committee.

The move has also coincided with some changes to the Board's membership. Ruby Lescott, who until recently was Executive Chair, has stood down after many years of service on the Executive Committee. John Campbell has taken over as Executive Chair of the new Board.

Scott Reeve replaces John as Vice Chair and Alan Crowe has been appointed Board Secretary.

The full list of Board members is as follows:

- John Campbell - Executive Chair
- Scott Reeve - Vice-Chair
- John Atkins - Treasurer
- Alan Crowe - Board Secretary

- Stephen Haseler - Honorary Chair
- Charles Brooker
- Suzanne Campbell
- Joe Coten
- John Tarrington

The transition to being a company does not change the democratic nature of the organisation. In fact being a company will mean that Republic will have to meet higher standards of accountability.

Annual Report

Republic's very first Annual Report will be published shortly. The report - which will be sent to all paid up members of Republic - will detail the activities, developments and finances of the organisation over the past year.

The introduction of the Annual Report forms part of Republic's strategy of better informing and involving members in the evolution of the organisation and the campaign strategy.

Annual Conference and 2007 AGM

This year's Annual Conference and

AGM are almost upon us. The newly styled conference is on Saturday October 28th, in central London. With a record membership and a much busier campaign schedule the Board is certain the attendance will be high, so put the date in your diary. Further details will be sent to all members over the next few weeks.

Conference Season

You may remember that last year Republic exhibited at the Labour, Liberal Democrat and TUC conferences in Brighton and Blackpool. Well, this year there has been a change of tack - Republic will be conducting fringe meetings at the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Party conferences, while also exhibiting at the SNP conference in Perth.

The Lib Dems remain a receptive audience while the main objective at the Conservative Conference will be to open a dialogue with those less traditionally associated with our cause.

If you are attending any of these conferences as party members and think you could help please get in touch with our office. ■

A Message from the Chair



John Campbell

It is said to be a curse to live in interesting times. I'm not so sure - I'd say we're lucky to be witness to the current changes in Republic, as well as changes in popular opinion about the monarchy and the royals.

Recent events, particularly the financial reports of Prince Charles and the revelations about the security costs of protecting Camilla's private home, have shown that attitudes are shifting. When even the Daily Mail blasts the Prince for his arrogance and nerve in trying to style himself as prudent and penny pinching, we know things aren't what they used to be.

Even the Times has given us credibility and exposure in recent weeks by quoting our responses to royal stories. Although most in the media remain oddly deferential to the

Queen, the gloves seem to be slipping off when it comes her Heir and Successor.

Perhaps it may still come to pass that Elizabeth will let her Heir down by allowing us to skip a generation to William. But I doubt that would make a lot of difference to the Firm's future prospects for survival, for two reasons: firstly William will be well into his forties by time his grandmother passes on, and no doubt will be losing his fresh, youthful appeal. Secondly, given the rapid progress Republic has been making in just the past eighteen months, imagine how strong and robust an organisation we will become over the next two decades.

Of course our success depends on your support - but I do believe that interesting and challenging times are ahead for us, for the movement and for the monarchy. Let those interesting times begin. ■

Media Update

The recent financial reports gave us widespread coverage on the BBC, Sky and on Channel 4 News.

Increasingly the press are reporting what we say, this time including the Times, Mirror, Sun, Scotsman and the Metro. We had interviews on Radio Wales, Three Counties Radio, Southern Counties Radio, Radio Leeds and more.

Our demonstrations certainly made an impact, getting extra coverage on TV and online. ■

NEW ADDRESS FOR REPUBLIC

Don't forget, Republic has a new postal address: PO BOX 69, BRIGHTON, BN50 9GS.

Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily the view or policy of Republic, its staff or its Board of Directors.

I AM A REPUBLICAN

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undemocratic, outmoded and frequently demeaning system of government and society. A republican is an individual who believes popular sovereignty – government of the people, by the people, for the people – is the hallmark of a just, meritocratic, democratic, dignified and truly honourable society. Republicans believe they possess the intelligence and the political maturity to select their own leaders – and that those leaders should themselves be elected, responsible, accountable and, if necessary, removable.

I am a republican.

The British political system itself has successfully marginalized republicanism. With every elected MP required to swear the oath of allegiance to the Queen, republicans have their cardinal principle neutered from the outset. Granted, in recent years, there have been anecdotes of MPs who take the oath with fingers crossed behind their backs – a tiny, futile gesture as they are sucked into a hide-bound, antiquated system. These are incidental republicans, by which I mean they're not elected on a specifically republican platform. I don't mean to be impossibly purist about this. It's quite likely many of them would not even get elected if they stood on such a platform. But it would certainly be refreshing to see one who had the courage to try it.

In 1991 I saw a billboard urging people to ensure they were on the

voters' roll for the 1992 general election (and a fat lot of good that did!). The ad declared: 'If you don't register, neither will your views.' I remember thinking at the time: 'And even if I do register, my views still won't.' I've voted in seven general elections in this country, but I've never been faced with a candidate who openly represented the core value of my political beliefs. Republicanism has been marginalized and almost rendered irrelevant at the electoral as well as the operational level of parliamentary politics in the complacently-christened United Kingdom.

The constituency in which I live has just had a by-election. As expected, the Labour candidate won – against nine others in the field: Scottish Nationalist, Lib Dem, Tory, Green, Scottish Socialist, UKIP, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, an Independent, and the wonderfully named 'Alliance for Change – Britain in Sin'. Yet there was one choice we didn't have. Was that because, in many parts of Scotland, the media's competent tarnishing of the word 'republican' has been particularly effective? Or because republicanism is anathema? Or because (many Socialists would argue) republicanism actually is an irrelevance – a distraction from broader social and political issues that require urgent redress?

The Scottish Nationalists, to their credit, have been willing to debate the question of republicanism. In 1993, the SNP conference rejected by a vote of 216-135 the motion to become a republican party (which begs the

question: just what kind of 'independent Scotland' did the majority of those delegates envisage?). More recently, in September 2005 their party conference voted to keep Nationalist representation out of the House of Lords: a sure sign of healthy disenchantment with government by the unelected. The Green Party is now officially republican, and one wouldn't imagine the Scottish Socialists or the Socialist Party of Great Britain are hell-bent on preserving the trappings of the merry lives of Windsors. So there are parties which, given the choice and the opportunity, would happily put the concept of monarchy out to pasture. But there's no-one standing explicitly, specifically, as a republican. In this free, open, democratic society of ours, there virtually never is.

That is a tragedy – but it's one that an ever-growing number of people in this country are no longer prepared to countenance with complacency. In these last months, one organization has brought the issue of whether there should even be a monarchy to the forefront of civil discourse. That organization is Republic, and it stands for just what it says on the tin.

Abolition of the monarchy is an issue most national politicians seem content to sidestep. Few dare call it reason, but it is an idea whose time is long overdue. ■

This is the first part of a full length article - to be serialised in *Imagine* - which was originally published in *The Drouth* magazine.

WINTER PARTY EARLY 2007

**DATE AND VENUE TO BE
CONFIRMED**

MANCHESTER

We are also looking into the feasibility of holding a 'Northern' Winter Party in Manchester. Please let us know if you'd be interested in attending and if you can recommend a good venue for the event. ■

Following the success of the *Republic Day Bash '06* Republic is very excited to announce the launch of the WINTER PARTY

**Tickets for the London event are
£8 in advance, £10 on the door.**

There will be FREE food, a cash bar, the chance to win quality prizes in a FREE raffle plus guest speakers - a great night out for everyone. ■





Local Campaigning

Republic and the Internet Revolution

■ WILLIAM SUMMERS

Whilst I appreciate that not everybody has access to the internet, it is increasingly becoming the campaigning tool of choice for innovative pressure groups looking to maximise their exposure.

Media insiders recognise there has been a revolution in the news industry in recent years. Previously we were locked in a one-way process, whereby broadcasters fed us the news they thought important. Since the rise of the internet, and particularly the 'blogging' phenomenon however, it is more and more becoming a two way process whereby the news is to some extent dictated by what those in the know are discussing over their broadband cables.

For the uninitiated, blogging (derived from *web-logging*) is when an internet user writes regular diary style entries onto their own website in the hope that others will read them. Most 'blogs' are read by only a handful (if any at all!), but some are actively creating the news with their gossip and, through their armies of in-the-know contributors, are aware of an imminent news story before professional journalists.

The Guy Fawkes blog (<http://5thnovember.blogspot.com>), Recess Monkey (www.recessmonkey.com) and Iain Dale (<http://iaindale.blogspot.com>) for example, have led with recent political stories (John Prescott's alleged affairs, Lord Levy's impending arrest) that mainstream broadcasters have been too slow – or have simply not dared – to break.

So what does this mean for Republic? When a royal story breaks, Republic needs to be seen and heard. The campaign team is currently reviewing how best we can promote ourselves using the internet

with an effective e-campaigning strategy. Primarily e-campaigning means keeping our website up to date and informative, but it is also much more than that. In addition to keeping our own members informed via the internet and by e-mail, we are looking at how we can better use the internet to reach out to new audiences.

Republic supporters can help us do this by actively taking part in internet discussion. Blogs are one thing (for republican or monarchy oriented blogs, try using www.technorati.com, a well known blog search engine, or go to the www.blogger.com portal site), but popular discussion boards also feature prominently on the websites of several national media organisations, including BBC News (www.bbc.co.uk/news).

Republic's campaign team is already dedicated to keeping a close eye on, and participating in, internet discussions for anything monarchy related, and you can also help promote the campaign by contributing to any online media stories you see, being sure to mention Republic if you can! Reputable media outlets like the BBC aim to publish comment on their website representing a fair reflection of all comments they receive. So it follows that the more republican comment they receive, the more favourable to the republican cause the debate will be.

Republicans continue to suffer from a biased media which can often disregard our position as insignificant, but with the rise of the internet, discussion boards and blog sites, we now have the opportunity to switch the balance in our favour. ■

✍ If any internet experts can offer advice to Republic about advancing our e-campaigning strategy, please call Graham Smith on 07747 608 770.



OXFORD GROUP GOES TO LEVELLERS DAY

Members of Republic's Oxford group took part in Levellers Day in Burford back in May.

The event was typical of the opportunities local groups have for promoting Republic in their area.

Organisers Stephen and Cassandra told *Imagine* the day went well, with lots of people signing Republic's petition, joining up or buying books and merchandise.

Levellers Day is an open air event in Warwick Hall Garden, Burford, and commemorates three Leveller soldiers who were executed on Cromwell's orders in Burford churchyard on 17 May, 1649.

The day's events included a parade (above), which attracted numerous groups and campaigns, including a good turnout from Republic. ■

Thanks to our petition collectors

Republic would like to thank all those members who have been sending in petition forms over the past few months. We have collected lots of new names recently as the result of the hard work and efforts of our members around the country.

Collecting petition signatures is an effective and easy way to support Republic. For more details give us a call. ■

www.republic.org.uk/groups